

# Texas Representative Roberto R. Alonzo's

## Capitol Report



(Picture above): Rep. Alonzo stands with former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young. The Dallas lawmaker just returned from Atlanta where he participated in the 2013 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) from Aug 12-15. NCSL is the annual national gathering of lawmakers from across the country who meet every year to discuss, exchange and debate legislative issues of mutual interest to states from all over the US, including education, health/human services, immigration, and transportation among others.

### **SB 1459 Co-Sponsored by Rep. Alonzo Sets Pension Fund on Path to Actuarial Soundness; Helps Current State Employees & Retirees**

Senate Bill 1459 which I co-sponsored in the House during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session is the first step on the road for our pension fund to return to fiscally sound basis. This omnibus legislation will change retirement eligibility criteria for new state employees hired after August 31, 2013. No current state employees will be affected by the new criteria. Most importantly, no current retiree benefits will be changed in any way either.

The current contribution rate for the retirement system will be 6.5% in FY 2014 and will rise to 7.5% in FY 2015. A rider in SB 1, the General Appropriations Act, allows certain unexpended balances to be deposited in the pension fund, possibly raising the state contribution up to 7.5% for FY 2014, with state agencies contributing 0.5% of their payroll to the fund.

Active state employees will also see their contribution rate rise over the next four years, starting at 6.6% in FY 2014. Each year, the state will increase a small amount, by FY 2017, employee contributions will be at 7.5%. There is authorization also in the legislation for a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for retirees who have been retired for at least 20 years. Additionally, SB 1459 contains some modification to future retiree health care benefits. Employees with at least five years of service by August 31, 2014 will be exempted from the change. A tiered premium contribution model based on years of service upon retirement will be instituted. If an employee has ten years of service when he or she retires, the state will contribute 50% of the premium. If the employee has 15 years, the state will contribute 75%, and at 20 years, the contribution will be 100%. And finally, SB 1 contains enough funding to keep the current premium contribution intact for current employees and retirees.

### **La Voz Del Anciano Latino Elderly Conference, Friday Aug 23**

Rep. Alonzo urges your attendance at the **2013 Latino Elderly Conference/Conferencia para Personas de la Tercera Edad**, hosted by La Voz del Anciano as follows:

**DATE:** Friday, August 23, 2013  
**WHERE:** Dallas City Hall, Lower Auditorium Level  
 1500 Marilla Street, Dallas, TX 75201  
**TIME:** 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Join us for a day of information and educational programs for senior citizens. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided **FREE** of charge. For more information, call (214) 207-7067.

**"I urge all senior citizens from the Dallas area to attend this very informative and educational conference," said Rep. Alonzo.**

